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Lessons at the Grave of the Pious.

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A DISCOURSE

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MISS FRANCES A. STRONG,

Principal of the Hartford Female Seminary,

WHO DIED APRIL 8TH, 1853.

BY J. HAWES, D. D.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE TRUSTEES, TEACHERS AND PUPILS  
OF THE HARTFORD FEMALE SEMINARY.

HARTFORD:  
PRESS OF CASE, TIFFANY AND COMPANY.  
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## DISCOURSE.

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JOHN 11: 31. SHE GOETH TO THE GRAVE TO WEEP THERE.

THIS was Mary the sister of Lazarus who was dead, and whom Jesus raised from the dead. She, with her sister Martha and brother, composed a little family which resided at Bethany, a small village on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, some two miles from Jerusalem. Thither our Lord often resorted in his journeyings to and from the city, and while residing there, for the purposes of intercourse and retirement. It was a pious family; they loved the society and the instructions of the Saviour, and on this account he frequently favored them with his visits. But though a pious family and tenderly loved by the blessed Saviour, it was not exempted from affliction and sorrow. Sickness entered the little happy group, and Lazarus the brother, was visited with dangerous, and as it proved, fatal disease. The sisters knowing the power of Christ to heal disease; and remembering how often they had shared in his tenderness and love, sent to him in the regions beyond Jordan, where he then was, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. They add no more; they present no request; they think it enough to give him who loved them information of the sickness of his friend, not doubting from his known kindness to all, and his peculiar intimacy with them, that he would in some way afford the succor they needed. But our blessed Lord, knowing what he meant ultimately to do, tarried where he was two full days, till Lazarus was dead. He then set out toward Bethany, and arrived there on the fourth day after the decease of his friend. He did not go immediately to the house where

the mourners were collected, but remained at a little distance out of the town, perhaps near the grave where Lazarus was buried. There Martha, on being informed of his coming, went out to meet him, and with mingled confidence and grief said, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Comforted with these and other words of promise and of love, spoken by the Saviour, she hastened away to inform her sister Mary, who remained still in the house, and said to her, The Master is come and calleth for thee. Roused from her grief by such a message, she rose up hastily and coming where Jesus was, she fell down at his feet, and repeating the words of her sister said, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. The Jews which were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth to the grave to weep there. That grave contained all that was mortal of her deceased brother; and it was natural to suppose that on leaving the house, she hastened there to indulge her griefs and pour out her prayers and tears. The scene was one of exceeding tenderness. Even the heart of Jesus was moved, and he wept with the weeping sisters and others weeping around him. But this scene of mourning was soon changed into one of joy. He who is the Resurrection and the Life, stood by the grave of the dead brother. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it. He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth! At once he came forth, animated with a new life and was restored with joy, to his weeping sisters and friends. That grave, containing the mortal remains of a friend of Jesus, was well suited to impress useful lessons on the minds of those who resorted there to mourn and to meditate. And much more was it adapted to impart such lessons when it was made the scene of the Saviour's Almighty power; and he who slept there in the cold embrace of death, was, at a word, raised to life, and so became the pattern and the pledge of the future resurrection of all that sleep in Jesus.

Without dwelling longer on the deeply interesting and instructive narrative connected with our text, let me invite



you, my brethren, to consider with me, on the present occasion, some of the lessons to be learned at the grave of the pious, especially of pious friends.

1. It is not forbidden us to mourn and weep when such as sustain this character are taken from us and laid in the tomb. Even Jesus wept at the grave of his friend; and he has thus dignified as well as vindicated by his example, the most sacred of our social feelings. Tears were made to be shed; and there is no more fitting occasion to shed them than when we are called to mourn the loss of near and dear friends. The love we bear to such friends is the source of our enjoyment in them while they are continued to us; and it is also the source of our suffering, when they are taken away. But who would purchase exemption from the sorrows of bereavement at the expense of the happiness derived from loving our friends; or, who would wish to forego the *moral benefits of affliction*, by being made incapable of weeping, or feeling the bitterness of sorrow when dear and loved ones go down to the dust? It is no office of religion to blunt our social affections, or render us insensible when the choicest of God's gifts in the persons of our friends, are taken from us. It is rather to refine and to elevate all the natural feelings of friendship and love; and to bind us in stronger and more sensible ties to those who, allied to us as kindred and friends, are also allied to us by the higher and more sacred relation of fellow-disciples of Jesus and fellow-heirs of the grace of life. We *may* mourn when such are taken from us by the stroke of death; and we may weep when we stand by their grave-side and are made to feel that we shall see them no more in this world. It is right and Christian to do so; nor if we were insensible under our afflictions, would they do us any good, or operate at all to promote our spiritual improvement. It is only as our hearts are tenderly affected, softened, subdued under the bereaving strokes of providence, that we are made better by them; brought nearer to God and to a higher preparation for his service and kingdom. Afflictions unfelt are, of course, unfruitful of good, and tend only to harden and to injure; but when they bow the spirit, sink down

deep into the heart and are sanctified by divine grace, they serve to root out the evils that dwell within, become the elements of a higher spiritual life, and the means of fitting us for a brighter crown in glory. In this view, it is good to be afflicted, to go to the grave and weep there; and that person is rather to be pitied than envied, who knows not the discipline of sorrow, whose heart has never melted and his tears never flowed under the bereavements of providence, in the loss of loved and cherished friends.

2. We are taught at the grave of the pious, often most impressively, the "awe-inspiring truth of God's inscrutable sovereignty." The life and breath of all are in his hand, and he calls them away at what time and in what manner he pleases. He has appointed that there should be no order in the grave; and his providence is continually carrying out this appointment before our eyes. We see persons falling around us of every age and in every variety of circumstances. As we stand in the midst of a burying-ground surrounded by the monuments of the dead, we are struck with the indiscriminate sovereign manner in which human beings are called out of life and gathered to their silent home in the grave. No health, no vigor, no social connections or circumstances of usefulness and happiness in life, furnish any protection against the attacks of the last enemy. At the appointed hour, known only to God, the summons comes forth, and the young, the vigorous, the useful and the happy, are hurried away to death and the grave, indiscriminately, with the aged, the sickly, the useless and the miserable. God designs by this to teach us that he is the Lord in the midst of the earth, and has a sovereign right to dispose of us and ours as seemeth good in his sight. He needeth not us or our services to carry out his plans. He can lay us aside and raise up others to fulfill his purposes and do his work. And as he has hidden from us both the time and the manner of our death, he would teach us to realize our dependence on him, never to presume on the continuance of life either in ourselves or our friends, but ever be ready to meet him in the sovereign dispensations of his hand. How affectingly is this lesson brought home to



our minds by the death of that dear friend whom we conveyed to her grave the last week. In how many hundreds of bosoms has the question arisen, Why was she taken away; taken away in the midst of her days; from a wide sphere of usefulness; from the affections and hopes of numerous friends, and from the love and confidence of a large body of pupils whom she was training to intelligence, virtue and happiness, and who delighted to open their minds and hearts to her kind and gentle influence? Scarcely an individual among us, a short time since, had a fairer prospect of life than our deceased friend; scarcely any one seemed to be doing more good, or to be more needed to fill the station of usefulness which she so long and so happily occupied.

But God, for reasons infinitely wise and good, though known to none but himself, has seen fit to take her hence, and her sun is gone down while it was yet day. And the voice that comes from her grave, bids us acknowledge the adorable sovereignty of God; and to stand in awe as we witness its mysterious exhibitions in the time and manner of his removing us and our friends from the earth.

3. At the grave of pious friends we are vividly and gratefully reminded of their past history; of the virtue that adorned their character; of the usefulness of their lives, and of the happy seasons of intercourse we have enjoyed with them. The grave has a wonderful power to quicken the memory in this respect. It seems almost to bring us into the presence of our departed friends, and to renew our fellowship and communion with them. We must all have felt this very sensibly, if we have ever stood by the grave-side of a father, mother, brother, sister, companion or child. How impressively does such a position bring to our minds the scenes of the past, the days gone by, when these loved ones sat by our side and we were happy in their society. As I stood the other day by the monument of my venerable predecessor, with the grave of his granddaughter open before me by the side of her parents, and on the spot where four of my own children lie buried, the scenes of other days rose impressively to my mind; the past and the present, the seen and the unseen, seemed mingled to-

gether, and in rapid thought I lived over again the years of my early ministry now passed with those beyond the flood. As I stood on that sacred spot, and looked upon the group of pupils there gathered around the grave of their loved teacher, and the numerous friends collected to express their sympathy and respect, I remembered how the deceased was the first child I saw when I came to this city thirty-five years ago; how I watched her growth and the unfolding excellency of her character; how I received her into communion with the church when she was a little passed fifteen years old, with some thirty others mostly of youthful age; how from that time she went forward adorning her Christian profession and living to do good; and how brightly and pleasantly her sun went down in the midst of us, leaving its light lingering in our horizon, and giving sweet promise of a fair rising in a happier world. The scene with all its associations, was one of deep and solemn interest to the speaker. And so, I doubt not, it was to many others who witnessed it. That grave is an instructive spot. It is vital with pleasant remembrances. It will not soon be forgotten nor forsaken. I visited the place yesterday. I saw that affection had already been there to strew the grave with flowers. Many in years to come will go there, if not to weep, yet to renew their recollections of her who rests there in soft and silent slumbers; to remember her virtues, recall her lessons of wisdom and piety, and gain quickening and encouragement from her example while they follow her up the bright and shining way to glory.

4. At the grave of the pious our thoughts naturally and necessarily follow them into the world whither they are gone. We not only remember them as they appeared in life, or as they were in intercourse and companionship with ourselves, but dropping from our minds whatever of imperfection or of weakness may have pertained to their character, we think of them as freed from the sins and from the trials and sorrows of life, and made pure and happy in a higher and nobler state of being. We miss them in the places where we were wont to meet them in happy converse and communion, and it is painful to reflect that we shall see them no more in this

world; but we can not bring ourselves to believe that they are not still in active, conscious existence; or that the grave contains all that remains of the friends whom we once so highly esteemed and so tenderly loved. It is said that Robert Hall in his early life embraced the doctrine of the materiality of the soul, or of its unconscious sleep till the final resurrection. But that doctrine, as he said, he buried in the grave of his father. His filial love and his Christian affection would not allow him to harbor in his bosom the cold, chilling sentiment that all that remained of his venerated and godly father, was inclosed in the coffin and laid in the earth to be the food of corruption and worms. So, at the grave of our friends, we look beyond that narrow house for the place of their abode. We lay their bodies down there. It is their appointed resting place till the final day. But we do not say, we can not make ourselves feel, that their souls, themselves, are there. We instinctively follow them beyond the grave's dark curtain. Our faith places them in holier and happier homes, in purer and more blessed society than they enjoyed here. And surely this is not an illusion. A voice from heaven assures us that those who die in the Lord enter at once into his presence; they are blessed from henceforth; and ceasing from their labors on earth, they are immediately received into glory. This precious truth comes home with consoling influence at the grave of pious friends. They have gone from us; but they are not lost to us; not lost to our affections nor to our communion and hopes. It is but a thin veil that separates them from us; that hides mortality from life; and friends departed may stand much nearer to us than we, in our loneliness, are apt to suppose. At least, there are warm, living sympathies joining us to them; and by means of which we hold communion with them though invisible to mortal eyes. Nor can it be doubted that this sympathy and communion are reciprocated by those who have been taken from us, but whom we yet love as tenderly as ever in the Lord. There are living links that bind them to us who are yet on the field of conflict. It can not be that in passing the barrier of the grave, they should cease to remember us who linger on this

side of that narrow boundary. It can not be that in that land of life and conscious existence, where they now are perfected in love, and happy in final exemption from sin, they should forget former friendships or be indifferent to those to whom, while here below, they were joined in the tender ties of kindred and affection. No; 'from the very necessity of the sympathizing remembrances with which their bosoms overflow, they must cast down looks of loving solicitude to their old friends and companions, and would, if it were possible, break the mysterious silence, and utter audible voices of encouragement, and reach forth signals of welcome.' These, in the view of faith, are undoubted realities; facts which have a stable foundation in the truth of God, and the contemplation of which is well suited to temper our grief under the loss of friends, and to fill the soul with ardent aspirations after a fitness for its long desired and blessed reunion with their society.

5. Another lesson taught us at the grave of the pious, is the transcendent excellence of the religion of the gospel. But for that, not a ray of light would fall on the darkness of the tomb. Death would indeed be the king of terrors, and the grave the seal of oblivion on the character and prospects of man. We should have no hope as we looked to the close of life; no consolation in the loss of friends, and no thought of meeting them again in a happier world. All would be darkness and gloom when death should come to do its last work and take from us the desire of our eyes.

But with the gospel in our hands, and its grace in our hearts, how different our condition and prospects. Life and immortality are brought to light. Death is deprived of its sting and the grave of its terrors. Peace, hope, joy and salvation enter the bosom; the scenes of the future are gilded with the light of eternal day; and believing in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, we resign our Christian friends to the tomb in the assurance that they sleep in Jesus and are blessed from henceforth even for ever. Hence, while we may rightly mourn our loss in their removal from us, we are forbidden to mourn as those that have no hope. We are com-



forted at their grave by the sweet words of promise and of hope which the gospel brings to our bosoms. We think how that gospel found them while estranged from God and dead in sin, and raised them to a new and heavenly life; how it brought them to sit at the feet of Jesus to learn of him, animated them with his love, beautified them with his spirit, and made them meet for his kingdom; how it guided them in life, comforted them in death, and gave them peace and hope as they pressed our hand at the verge of Jordan, bade us farewell, and passed over to enter the celestial city. For these precious remembrances, these divine consolations, we are indebted to the gospel of the grace of God, and never does that gospel appear so excellent, so glorious, as when it comes to shed its light and comfort in the sick and dying room, and around the grave of pious friends. And how precious a testimony to the excellence of the gospel is furnished in the life and death of that dear one who has just departed from the midst of us. In her tender age, she was drawn to give herself to the love and service of her Saviour. She took his yoke upon her and found it easy, and his burden, and found it light. Her religion—not an impulse, or transient feeling, but a living, vital principle—sweetened all her natural dispositions, beautified all her natural characteristics—enabled her to live a consistent, happy, useful Christian life, and to meet her last great change in the calmness and serenity of a settled hope of immortal happiness. It was all the fruit of the grace of the gospel, of the gospel embraced and loved in her youthful age and carried out in the active duties of life. And now, how pleasant to think of the brief, but bright day she was permitted to live; and how consoling as we stand by her grave, to reflect that the life of piety and of usefulness she led here below has terminated in the joys of everlasting life in the presence of her God and Saviour.

6. The Scriptures authorize the hope, and we love to cherish it at the grave of pious friends, that we shall see them again hereafter, and be reunited to them in purer and happier bonds of affection, to be parted no more forever. I may not here take time to prove the reunion of Christian friends in another

world. The sentiment is one that clings to our very being; we can not separate it, if we would, from our hope of a future life; it becomes dearer and dearer to us the longer we live and the more numerous the friends that have left us, and gone before to their final home. We hope to meet them again, to meet them in the mansions of glory, and with them ever to be present with the Lord; to spend a long eternity in mutual intercourse, joy and blessedness. This hope sanctifies our friendships, binds us in stronger and more sacred ties to those whom we love in the Lord, and affords us divine consolation and support as we stand by their graves and see the cold earth close over their mortal remains. They are not there, those whom we love are not; they have gone to be with their and our Saviour in glory, and there they are waiting to welcome us to their fellowship and joys when, having done the will of our Lord, we shall be called away from the scenes of earth and time. And happy, happy beyond all that we can now conceive, will be the meeting of those who, parted here on the shores of time, shall be reunited again in the mansions of the blessed, never more to be separated. Glorious and delightful contemplation! Whose heart does not yearn to realize it? 'Is there no parent that instinctively reverts to the departed child? No child that is reminded of the vanished parent? No friend of the severed friend?' Be cheered in the thought that the time is not distant when you will regain what you have lost; be restored to the society of dear and loved friends from whom death has parted you for a season. 'If the grave,' as one speaks, 'has received many who were once allied to us in the ties of kindred and love, so has the region of life and light beyond it. Ten thousand chords of sympathy, invisible except to the eye of faith, connect our world with that better land. In one sense, it is becoming less and less unknown. The distance diminishes as the avenues are multiplying, along which throng holy desires, earnest sympathies, longing aspirations. Even now the shores of that happy land are thronged by earthly natures, once like our own, now made perfect in love,' waiting to welcome companions and friends here below to their society and blessedness. And



among them, we can not doubt, is our dear departed friend, who having joined others gone before her to that world, is now waiting, in her turn, to embrace with new affection and sympathy, friends and loved pupils who were endeared to her on earth, and whom, under God, she drew to the Saviour and trained to piety, to duty and salvation.

7. At the grave of pious friends we are affectingly reminded of their parting words and farewell counsels. The words of the dying always make a deep impression on the minds of the living. They are spoken with so much sincerity, affection and earnestness; and are addressed to sensibilities so tenderly alive and receptive of impression, that they are wont to abide in the memory through all coming years. The words of a dying father, mother, brother, sister, loved friend or teacher—who ever forgets? Or if, perchance, they may seem for a time to fade from the mind—be forgotten, how quickly is the memory of them revived on visiting the room where they were uttered, or standing by the grave of those who with their dying breath spoke to us words of counsel and of love. That last interview which our deceased friend had with her beloved pupils two days before her death, they will surely never forget it; and wherever their lot may be cast in future life, oft as their thoughts recur to that dying room, or to the grave of their dear and revered teacher, the memory of her last words will rise to their minds and seem fresh as yesterday. Those words! I may not attempt to repeat them. They were just such as were suited to the occasion, breathing of intelligence, love and deep concern for the present and eternal happiness of those to whom they were spoken. The whole scene, as represented by those who witnessed it—the speaker was absent from the city—was one of indescribable interest and impressiveness. It seems wonderful that when for weeks previous, the severity of her disease had been such as almost entirely to prevent her seeing her friends, she should now, just as the light of life was going out, have strength given her to see and speak to all her pupils in her sick room. She felt a strong desire to do this before she should die; it was her last duty, her last wish, and

she was enabled to perform it in the most calm, intelligent and impressive manner, just like herself. As all the members of the seminary could not see her at once, they were gathered around her in three separate classes, as she lay supported in her bed. In a clear, full voice she expressed her happiness at being able to see them once more. She said she should live but a few days, perhaps not one day. "We had hoped to pursue our studies together, and to enjoy together the opening of this sweet season, and that the Holy Spirit would be with us. But God has disappointed our hopes and interrupted us in the midst of our plans; and what he does is right." She then spoke, particularly to the graduating class, of their connection with the seminary; wishing them to remain together, to go on and complete their studies, seeking to cheer and sustain their teachers; and "Remember," she said, "if you love Miss Strong, that it is her school till the end of the term; it is her class which is to graduate. My next advice, will relate not to the present season only, but to your whole existence." Then in her own, peculiar, characteristic manner, she proceeded to speak of the importance of their forming, each one for herself, a refined, pure, high-minded, lady-like character. Such a one, she said, will pass through life much more usefully and agreeably than one of careless and unrefined habits. "How much better to be a beautiful flower, shedding fragrance around and giving pleasure to all, than a rank unsightly weed." "How much better to be a pure, beautiful, transparent vase, reflecting the light of heaven, than a dingy crockery cup which no one wishes to see."

Her next advice was, "Be intelligent; improve every advantage for gaining knowledge; learn something every day. How much better to be wise than a fool? And it rests with you which you will be. Oh, my dear pupils, cultivate the talents God has given you. Study his works, and grow every day in wisdom and knowledge." Then adverting to the subject which was always first and prominent in all her teachings, she said, "But *above*, and *in* all, and *through* all, be Christians. Oh, my dear girls, live for Christ; let his love

be in you and inspire all your actions. You have a great work to do for him. Begin the work in your own hearts; cherish whatever is right; banish from them all that is wrong. Whatever God commands, that do. Whatever is God's will, let that be your will. Let nothing turn you away from duty. Follow Christ in doing good. Cultivate love, tenderness, compassion toward all. Love every human being—the poor beggar in the street, the decrepid old woman, the poor drunkard; strive to make all happier and better. Remember that your strength is in Christ, that salvation is through him alone. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;” then closing her eyes, she added, with an emphasis, “*of whom I am chief.*” At the close of the interview she drew her pupils one by one to her bedside, and taking each by the hand, gave the farewell kiss, adding a few words of counsel, such as she deemed suited to each one's particular case. Nothing could have been more touching, more wise, more useful or more in keeping with her own character, than this last act of Miss Strong's life. And may it appear on another day that the kind, judicious and weighty counsels that fell from her dying lips, found a permanent lodgment in the bosoms of all who heard them; may they abide there in ever grateful remembrance, and ripen into fruits of holiness unto eternal life. Her work on earth is done; and a great work it is. She lived a long life in a short one. More than twenty of the thirty-nine years of her earthly being, she spent in what was ever to her a most delightful employment, that of teaching young ladies. She was first employed as an assistant teacher, while a pupil, in the Seminary in this city, where she was educated. At the age of nineteen she went to Huntsville, Alabama, where she taught five years as Assistant Principal in a flourishing Female Institution. She then went to New Orleans, and afterward to Philadelphia, in each of which places she drew around her a large number of pupils, and was highly appreciated as a teacher. In 1848, she removed to this city, and with what entire acceptance and success she has presided over our Seminary, and trained our daughters,

with others committed to her care, hundreds now before me can testify. As a teacher, she combined more qualifications for that high and honorable office, than any person I ever knew. She possessed great strength of mind, a vivid imagination, fine taste and singular quickness of perception. As a teacher, she followed no beaten track. Whatever the subject, she was never satisfied till she reached the *principle*, and was sure that every member of the class possessed it. Her manner of imparting instruction was most impressive; her language strong and clear; her illustrations apt and forcible: of course, she always gained the entire attention of every member of the class. Endowed with very superior natural talents and highly cultivated; possessing a large share of practical common sense, a keen insight into character, and admirable skill in adapting means to its development; with a kindness and love ever outflowing, shedding sunlight over her countenance and imparting sweetness and attraction to all her words and actions; self-forgetting, self-denying in an eminent degree; living to do good, and to make others good and happy, and withal, governed in everything by Christian principle, animated by faith and cheered by hope, she was universally revered and beloved by her pupils and all who knew her; her influence over young minds was at once charming, transforming, irresistible; tending alike to draw them to her in confidence and love, and to form them to habits of intelligence, virtue, piety and usefulness. Her government seemed to me like a sort of enchantment,—so still, so easy, so unfelt, as it were, and yet so all-pervading and efficient. She ever felt a deep and tender interest in the spiritual good of her pupils. No opportunity was lost to remind them of their duty to God, or to win their hearts to the Saviour; and the manner in which she showed this interest in imparting religious instruction was so kind, so affectionate and faithful, that it could hardly fail to disarm prejudice where it existed, and to leave the impression on the minds of all who listened to her words, that religion is indeed the one thing needful, and the best and the most lovely treasure of the soul. Her power in giving religious instruc-



tion was great. Her own views of divine truth were exceedingly clear, decided and beautiful, and in language, familiar, plain and striking, she labored to impress them upon others, and her success was very marked.

Many now before me, many too, scattered in different parts of the country, will remember as long as they live and forever, her kind Christian instrumentality in drawing them to the Saviour, and encouraging them to aspire after high attainments in the divine life. Happy if all these, faithful unto death, shall meet her hereafter in the world of light, whither we trust she is gone. Yes, she is gone. She will be seen no more in our assemblies of worship; her voice be heard no more in the halls of instruction, where in the midst of loved and loving pupils, it was so often heard, delightfully imparting lessons of wisdom, and guiding in the way to virtue, knowledge and heaven. We say of her, she is dead! But no; she is not dead. She still lives; lives in all that makes life desirable or valuable. She lives in her consistent, Christian example, seen and read of all who knew her. She lives in the impressions made on the minds of some thousand or twelve hundred pupils—four hundred while in this city—who during the twenty years of her life, given to teaching, came under her instruction and received the type and form of their character from her molding hand. She lives in the grateful remembrance and deep affection of a numerous circle of friends here and elsewhere, and especially in the hearts of her mourning pupils, who feel, and justly, that they have lost their best earthly friend. She lives, more than all, in the high powers of mind she possessed and cultivated while here; in the virtues she acquired, and in the holy affections she cherished, now perfected in heaven. She lives in the presence of the Saviour whom she loved and served, and with all those dear departed ones who have gone before her to glory; and there, if friends of Christ, we may hope to meet her again, and with all the redeemed of the Lord, mingle in eternal fellowship and love in the presence of our Saviour and God.

From the whole, let this one great lesson be learnt by all present; by all who knew and loved the deceased; or may hear of her useful life and of her happy triumphant death. Live to be useful; live to do good; so live each one that when—

“Thy summons comes to join  
 The innumerable caravan, that moves  
 To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
 His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
 Thou go not like the quarry slave at night  
 Scourged to his dungeon; but sustained and soothed  
 By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
 About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”



FROM THE CONNECTICUT COURANT OF APRIL 19TH.

## THE FUNERAL OBSEQUIES OF MISS F. A. STRONG.

THE funeral of the beloved and lamented Principal of the Hartford Female Seminary, Miss FRANCES A. STRONG, took place in the Center Church on Monday, April 11th, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The pupils of the deceased, about one hundred and fifty in number, including some twenty-five who had previously graduated, met their Teachers at the Seminary at two o'clock, while the relatives and near friends assembled at the house, where a prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Hawes, the Pastor of the deceased. A procession was then formed for the Church. As the hearse, accompanied by four of the Trustees as pall-bearers, approached the Seminary, the pupils came out and preceded the procession.

As the procession entered the Church, the choir accompanied by the organ, performed that solemn chant in the Burial Service, "Lord make me to know mine end, &c.," after which the divine blessing was invoked, and appropriate passages of Scripture were read. Then a favorite hymn of the deceased,

"Oh, for the death of those  
Who slumber in the Lord."

While the fourth verse was being read,

"With us their names shall live,  
Through long succeeding years,"

at the third line,

"Embalmed with all our hearts can give,"

there was a tremulous and momentary cessation of voice; the Pastor seemed lost in the friend. We remembered that "Jesus wept."

Then followed a short address; a tributary effusion of remembered excellencies, and bereaved affections; perfectly unstudied and free, designed for the different classes of mourners present, the pastor, the friends and the pupils, but deeply affecting to all.

Dr. Hawes remarked that the deceased was the first child he saw on entering Hartford thirty-five years ago—that he had watched her unfolding excellencies with all the interest of a father—and that now he committed her to the dust as a beloved child. He had hoped she would have lived long to have diffused her influence over the young in this place, and the community

generally. He pointed her pupils to what she was, as what they should be; affectionately and impressively reminded them of her dying counsels, which he charged them never to forget. Then touched again upon his own deep bereavement in her removal. This naturally carried his thoughts upward, and pointing toward heaven he said, "She is there," "Yes, she is in heaven," "It is enough," "It is enough." Then the prayer in which thanksgiving that "Heaven was gathering to itself all that was most lovely and attractive upon the earth," took the lead of the petitions and supplications which were offered. The Funeral Dirge,

"Unvail thy bosom, faithful tomb,"

closed the interesting and mournful exercises.

There was much in that scene in the church calculated to stir the feelings, and much also to elevate them—the quiet, though decided manifestation of feeling, by the large audience gathered there, evidently not from curiosity, but from real interest in the deceased—then the slow and solemn music, the deep and muffled tones of the organ, the sweet and sympathizing voices of the choir; the sentiments of the pieces sung breathing the spirit of heaven—the inexpressible pathos of the pastor's voice, as he read those sublime and comforting passages of Scripture, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;" "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;" and others of like import—and added to all, the assembly of mourning pupils, who filled a large number of the slips on either side of the center aisle of the church.

Not quite a year had elapsed since a similar audience, but for a far different purpose, was gathered in that place. Then the pupils were there—not as now, clad in the habiliments of mourning, but arrayed in the garb of youthful gladness, and cheered by the approving smile of their beloved Teacher. A large class came forward to receive from the hands of the Pastor, the President of the Board of Trustees, the testimonials of their scholarship, and numbers more were looking forward to a similar scene the present summer.

They may indeed come there, and receive their diplomas, but their beloved Teacher—alas, they will hear her voice, they will see her smile no more. But is it too much to expect that her influence will live in them

"Through long succeeding years?"

The respect shown to the memory of Miss Strong was alike creditable to the community, and gratifying to her numerous friends. The mourning train was said to be the longest that ever passed through the streets of the city.

The body of Miss Strong was deposited in the North Burying Ground, near the tomb of her paternal grandfather, the Rev. Dr. Strong, the immediate predecessor of the present Pastor, and whose talents and excellencies she inherited in large measure.

The scene at the grave was one which will not soon be forgotten. As the coffin was being lowered into the earth, there was a breathless silence amid the gathered throng of pupils, and as they leaned over to take their last look, it seemed as if they wanted to lie down with their beloved Teacher in the grave.

The foregoing account was prepared with especial reference to the numerous absent pupils of Miss Strong; all of whom, would doubtless have felt it a privilege to have met, and mingled their sympathies with those who were present at her funeral. They would have been grateful, even if it were for but one look into her coffin, where she slept among the flowers which the hand of affection had strewed within it, in their purity and fragrance, emblematical of the influence which she shed forth in her life and her example, over all whom these could reach. Could they have seen her, as those present did, in that last quiet repose, associating with it, the recollection of her beautifully consistent Christian character, they would have felt that hers was indeed that

“Blessed sleep,  
From which none ever wakes to weep.”

So may all her pupils sleep, and rise to stand with their beloved Teacher, at *that day*.

IN MEMORY OF  
MISS FRANCES A. STRONG,

PRINCIPAL OF THE "HARTFORD FEMALE SEMINARY."

Not often to the grave, whence all depart,  
Does one in yet unfaded years descend,  
So widely honored by the general heart,  
So much lamented as the common friend,

So rich in talent, and in learning's store,—  
Yet so intent their varied gifts to lay  
A tribute to the patient teacher's lore,  
From early youth, to life's expiring ray.

High powers were hers, with rare discernment fraught,  
Our sinuous nature thro' its folds to read,  
To rule and modify the minds she taught,  
Yet gently as an elder sister lead,

The thought of self,—with all-pervading root,  
Was absent from her heart, and thus the space  
Left large and noble, for the blest pursuit  
To understand and love and serve her race ;

To train her sex, in youth's delightful morn,  
Not for the pride of intellect alone,  
Or self-indulgent ease from luxury born,—  
But for all tasks that Heaven ordained their own,

All deeds of charity, all joys serene  
That on their own peculiar sphere attend,  
To fit for this probationary scene,  
And for a being that can never end.

So, with melodious tone and cloudless smile  
That knew no bigot chain, nor venal art,  
She passed like sunbeam on her blessed toil,  
Heart prompting mind, and mind sustaining heart.

But at a stroke, the earnest step was staid,  
 That ne'er had faltered in its zealous aim  
 When Friendship beckoned, or when Duty bade,  
 Till stern Disease with prisoning mandate came.

And pictured ever on her bosom's scroll,  
 Were those fair girls to whom were freely given  
 The honied essence of her balm-fed soul,  
 Her fervent study, and her prayer to Heaven :

And when life's ebbing tide declined in death,  
 Once more she longed those cherished forms to view,  
 And nursed with added care the failing breath,  
 As to her curtained room their steps she drew.

They clustered round her bed,—that blooming band—  
 With grieving hearts and faces sadly sweet,  
 Who from far regions of our wide spread land  
 Had sate as pupils fondly at her feet.

Serene and calm—with spirit raised above—  
 She touched the fountain of their filial tears,  
 And kindly softened with a kiss of love  
 Her parting counsel to their tender years.

Strength for that hour!—and then her work was done,  
 Undoubting, on her Saviour's arm she fell,  
 And saw in beauty sink the placid sun  
 Of sweet-voiced April, that she loved so well,

To rise for her,—with vernal smile once more,  
 And song of birds, and breath of opening flowers,  
 For the blest mission of her life was o'er,  
 Its goal achieved,—she was no longer ours.

Her home was where her treasure lay enshrined,  
 Where the pure soul might its own ether share,  
 Unbowed, undimmed, unwearied, unconfined  
 By days of labor, or by nights of care.

They bore the broken casket's pallid clay,  
 Spring's snowy blossoms on the stainless breast—  
 Forth to that Temple where she joyed to pay  
 Her Sabbath vows, while yet an infant guest.

And there her Pastor's voice pathetic fell  
 On the hushed throng that bent to sorrow's sway,  
 While holy music with its tuneful swell  
 Would fain have charmed the rankling pang away.

Then in procession long, with measured chime  
 Fast by her grandsire's couch her own they spread,  
 Who, full of faith and eloquence sublime  
 Till hoary age a reverent people led.

There, two and two, arrayed in sable stole,  
 Those sorrowing pupils tread the hallowed clay,  
 The funeral anguish darkening in their soul  
 As from that open grave they turn away.

Yet there as days and weeks successive fleet  
 Beside the sacred mound they duly bend,  
 And strew the springing turf with blossoms sweet,  
 And mourn with flowing tears the buried friend ;

She who accomplished ere her waning prime,  
 More good than oft the longest life endears,  
 Condensing in a narrow span of time  
 The work and wisdom of protracted years.

True patriot praise is theirs, who steadfast lead  
 The unfolding mind to knowledge and to truth,  
 Sow the soft plastic soil with heavenly seed,  
 And bind to virtue all the force of youth ;

For more than mine of gold, or warrior band,  
 The penal statute, or the lifted steel,  
 They guard the interests of a peaceful land,  
 And silently promote their country's weal.

Yet not from changeful meed of earthly fame  
 She sought her motive, solace or reward,  
 But toiled in love, till the Dark Angel came,  
 And found her rest forever with the Lord.

L. H. S.





